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**SOCIETY AND THE SOLDIER'S SOUL: IS THE WARRIOR'S
PURIFICATION RITUAL NEEDED OR POSSIBLE IN MODERN
AMERICA?**

by

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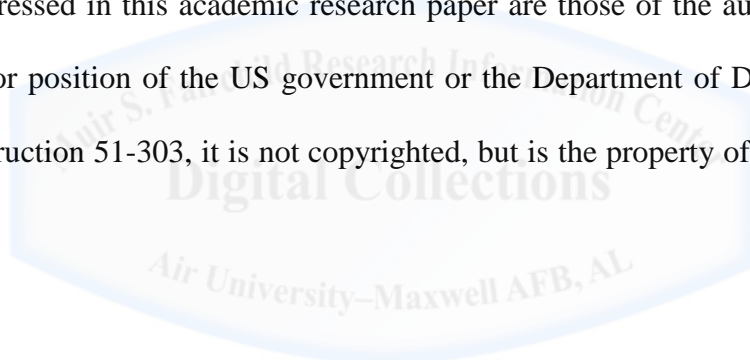


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ABSTRACT

In various historical cultures, soldiers underwent a communal, religious post-combat ritual to assist their transition back to civilized life; such a ritual is lacking in modern American culture, but is both needed for those who have experienced combat and possible to reconcile with concepts of American liberal democracy. I will argue that this is possible because politics has assumed the force of religion in America, and that this provides a context for determining what the characteristics of such a ritual might be for modern American society. An historical review of religious purification ritual and its cultural context, coupled with an analysis of the concept of the soul and the sacred found in PTSD therapy and the idea of America as a society of “civil religion,” should inform the possibility of a culturally acceptable mechanism of purification which the American soldier can undertake.

Introduction. Despite decades of research into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), many American soldiers still have difficulty fully reintegrating into society after experiencing combat.¹ Historically, the warrior undertook a culturally accepted and expected ritual purification after battle; this was the mechanism which allowed him to cleanse himself of the destruction he had undertaken on behalf of the state and return to the society from which he had separated himself in order to undertake that destruction.² Based on his extensive work with Vietnam veterans who suffer from PTSD, Department of Veterans Affairs psychiatrist Jonathan Shay offers that today,

As a society we have found ourselves unable to offer purification to those who do the terrible acts of war on our behalf...What I have in mind is a communal ritual with religious force that recognizes that everyone who has shed blood, no matter how blamelessly, is in need of purification...I do not know how the creation of a new and widely accepted practice can be accomplished, but I do know we need it.³

In historical cultures, civilian society and military society were linked by religion and ritual in a way they are not in modern America; thus the challenge is to find a ritual that has a “religious force,” that is accepted within a larger, liberal democratic culture, and that has efficacy for the soldier’s transition back into that culture. I will argue that this is possible because politics has assumed the force of religion in America (as discussed by Gentile and Hook and Spanier separately as a “civil religion”) and that this provides a context for determining what the characteristics of such a ritual might be for modern American society. An historical review of religious purification ritual and its cultural context, coupled with an analysis of the concept of the soul and the sacred found in PTSD therapy and the idea of America as a society of “civil religion,” should inform the possibility of a culturally acceptable mechanism of purification which the American soldier can undertake in order to, as Dr. Shay puts it, help protect him from the psychological and moral injury which inevitably accompany him out of war. The Army’s Warrior Transition Command and former CJCS Mullen’s “Total Force Fitness” concepts include spiritual components, which may provide a starting point for discussion of how such a mechanism fits into military culture.

Thesis. In various historical cultures, soldiers underwent a communal, religious post-combat ritual to assist their transition back to civilized life; such a ritual is lacking in modern American culture, but

is both needed for those who have experienced combat and possible to reconcile with concepts of American liberal democracy.

Research Methodology. First, I will conduct an historical review of the use of religious purification rituals for soldiers after war, focusing on cultures considered forerunners of Western civilization. Next, I will argue that a comparable “ritual” is needed in American culture by analyzing literature concerning the concepts of the soul and the divine in the therapy of Vietnam veterans who suffer from post (-combat) traumatic stress disorder. I have chosen this group as particularly illustrative of the concept of the difficulty the warrior finds in reintegrating into society after combat, which the purification ritual is intended to facilitate; additionally, PTSD in these combat veterans is well-researched, such that sufficient literature regarding the concept of religion as it relates to them should be available.⁴ Then I will explore how a comparable ritual could be feasible in American liberal and democratic culture by examining the concept of America as a society with a “civil religion.” Finally, I will examine what such a ritual might consist of and how it might differ from current “ritual” (such as the post-deployment physical health assessment, decompression time, the Army’s Warrior Transition Command, etc.).

Limitations and Assumptions. The scope of this paper necessitates several limitations. Anthropological, psychological and religious examinations of the use and meaning of religious ritual comprise a vast body of literature; no attempt can be made here for a comprehensive review of the subject. Rather, a summary view intends to provide context for discussion of the religious ritual of purification and the warrior. The historical use of religious ritual by warriors post-combat is further limited to societies considered the forerunners of Western society, as most applicable to a study of the soldier in a modern Western culture. War is, however, an experience which all societies have in common, and a much wider review could be, and has been, made. Additionally, this paper approaches historical societies somewhat monolithically, and viewed against a general discussion of each society’s cultural background. While a much more detailed examination of divisions within

each society's history and culture could also be made, it is assumed that relevant observations can still be found in a general overview. Furthermore, discussion regarding the military context of ritual for the modern soldier is limited to CJCSI 3405.01 and the concept of "Total Force Fitness." This was selected as it is a relatively recent and formal instruction from senior military leadership which proposes to change military culture through an emphasis on several aspects of the soldier's health and resilience, to include spiritual fitness. A much more thorough examination of how each branch of the military includes spiritual fitness in its post-combat assessment of soldiers would have to be incorporated in future research. Finally, this discussion proceeds on the assumption that it is the soul, whether an actual or symbolic aspect of mankind, that houses man's relationship with the divine, sacred, or moral, and that this is distinct from (even if related to) the mind, which houses man's thoughts. An expanded scope would explore this concept in historical thought and modern perspective.

Background – Ritual and Purification. Despite many cultural variations of expression and purpose, cross-cultural similarities make some generalization regarding mankind's use of religious ritual possible. Evan M. Zuesse divides religious ritual into two categories: confirmatory and transformatory. Confirmatory rituals "sanctify the distinctions and boundaries that structure the cosmos" and link the individual and his society to that cosmos.⁵ Taboos, blessings, and meditation are confirmatory rituals which serve to focus the individual on man's link to the divine by "ritual[izing] consciousness."⁶ Confirmatory rituals thus demarcate boundaries and establish societal and cosmic order, as well as place the individual within that order. Transformatory rituals "arise in response to anomaly, fault, disequilibrium and decay, and they have as their aim the restoration of harmony and ideal patterns."⁷ These Zuesse further divides into transitional rituals, such as those related to birth and death, and restorative rituals, "which return the regenerated element to its previous place in the whole" and include rites of purification and healing.⁸

Zuesse describes his division of transformatory rituals into transitional and restorative classes

as “loosely distinguish[ed];” the two are closely related in many religions and a single ritual may serve both purposes.⁹ Preston expresses the same idea of this close relationship, though he does not use Zuesse's nomenclature. He writes,

The purification of religious pollution is a major religious theme because it forges a path of expiation, healing, renewal, transcendence, and reintegration, establishing harmonious triangular links among the individual, the cosmos, and the social structure...The individual accomplishes one of five types of rituals (involving fire, water, detergents, purgation or scapegoats) in order to purify one of three types of pollution (arising from “bodily functions, social bonding, and the maintenance of boundaries of the 'holy' or 'sacred’”).¹⁰

Particular rituals as described by Preston are all transformatory in nature, though, to use Zuesse's terminology, some are transitional (such as funerals), some are restorative (such as fasting), and some may be both (such as a pilgrimage or baptism).

The unclean state which makes ritual purification or healing necessary arises in some cultures from deliberate and willful violations of boundaries, laws, or customs. But in other cultures, pollution is, or can also be, “accidental or unintended by the agent, as in the case of menstrual or death pollution.”¹¹ In such cases, guilt or shame associated with the impurity, and necessitating the purification, do not arise because of the *individual*, but from the *event* in which he participated or with which he was somehow associated, though it may be the individual who is considered impure and who must undertake the purification ritual. This concept can be particularly important for the warrior. Employing what the culture considers inhumane or immoral methods of killing in battle (such as torturing the enemy into a slow death or killing children) may certainly pollute the warrior, and in some cultures, by extension, the warrior's society. But even participation in what is considered by the culture as just or moral killing in battle can cause pollution, as can the simple association with the death of comrades, as well as of enemies, which will inevitably occur in war. Thus, merely being present in war can bestow pollution.

Historical Perspective – The Warrior’s Purification Ritual for the Forerunners of the Modern American Soldier¹²

The Israelite Warrior of the Pentateuch. To the Israelites, whose history and culture is told in the Old Testament, God was a “deity transcendent and sovereign over all;” they lived in a religious society which “base[d] its jurisprudence upon theological conceptions in which law and morality were closely intertwined...[God was] the source of morality...For this reason legal and moral norms were not distinguished in the bible.”¹³ Therefore, “noncompliance with the law...represent[s] a religious offense that affects humanity’s relationship with God.”¹⁴ This made morality both a public and private affair, as certain offenses brought blame upon family or society and not just the individual committing them.

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy lay out three major sets of laws for Israelite social interaction and religious practice, and describe both public and private religious ritual requirements. These include transformatory rituals (transitional and restorative), with many focused on the concept of becoming clean or returning to a state of cleanliness.¹⁵ In *Numbers* 19:11-22, death imparts incidental pollution on the individual who touches a “bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave,” as well as on the tent the individual enters, and any unsealed containers, all of which must undergo purification with water and hyssop on the third and seventh days, after which they are considered as having been restored to a state of cleanliness.

Moses and Eleazar the priest specifically include warriors who have been in battle in the set of men who are made impure by association with death. In *Numbers* 31:19, Moses instructs men who have killed or touched the slain to separate themselves from the camp and purify both themselves and their captives on the third and seventh days. Eleazar provides further specific instructions; the soldiers must use fire to purify everything that can withstand burning and water for everything which cannot.¹⁶ On the seventh day, they will have restored their cleanliness and can reintegrate into the society of those who were not involved in battle and return to camp. The unclean warrior’s physical separation from camp until he has undergone ritual purification is significant, for

God walks amongst the camp.¹⁷ That this uncleanness is incidental, arising from the warrior's association with death, rather than from some sacrilege associated with killing, is indicated by the previous verses, in which the Israelites, on the instruction of Moses, slew all male Midianites in war; indeed, Moses was angered that they had not also slain the Midian women.¹⁸ The Israelites waged holy war, God walked among their camps to deliver to them their enemy, and they did not consider even annihilation as an immoral act; but this did not stop death from imparting pollution which required separation from society and ritual purification before the warrior's reintegration.

The Warrior of Imperial Rome. Religion was likewise both a public and private affair during Imperial Rome.¹⁹ Political leaders and military officials were also religious leaders, and the people considered the emperor god-like, if not a god, within one of Rome's many public cults. Ritual practices were integral to both state and private religion. "The Romans accepted that the safety and prosperity of their communities depended upon the gods, whose favour was won and held by correct performance of the full range of cult practices inherited from the past."²⁰ Bargaining rituals, in which a specific ritual action was performed or promised in return for fulfillment of prayer, as well as confirmatory and transformatory rituals, were common throughout the Roman Empire's many public and private religious cults.²¹

Within this cultural context, Rome allowed her soldiers to practice in accordance with individual religious beliefs, and the army took part in public religious activities. Among many other state religious rituals, Roman armies underwent ritual purification (known as *lustratio exercitus*, translating literally as 'the purification of the army'), sometimes before battle, sometimes after (or sometimes both). This ritual may also have been performed on the Campus Martius (the sacred field dedicated to the Roman god of war, Mars) at the start and end of the military campaign season.²² The Roman practice of leading a victorious army under a triumphal arch may also have been a ritual purification; soldiers decorated themselves and their standards for both rituals with laurel, a plant commonly used for purification in other aspects of Roman culture.²³

Scholars disagree as to the purpose of the purification ritual and the sacred nature of an army's triumph. Pritchett suggests that Roman generals conducted the *lustratio exercitus* in order "to remove superstitious dread" from soldiers before battle.²⁴ Lennon argues that the purification ritual was not merely to remove dread before battle, but may have included the use of laurel to "cleanse the army of its bloodshed."²⁵ In common with the Israelites, Roman soldiers were unlikely to attach any moral disapprobation to the act of killing itself, or find war immoral. But the performance of the ritual after battle and at the close of the warrior's season indicate the Romans may have felt that some incidental, religious pollution attached itself to the army or the soldier from nearness to death or blood.²⁶ As Lennon points out, Vergil in his imperial epic poem, *The Aeneid*, supports the idea that the imperial Romans saw some impurity associated with the individual's presence in combat—Aeneas, having just taken part in battle, states that he must purify himself before approaching his household gods.²⁷ Dumezil sees the act of battle as a sacred undertaking; therefore, at the end of the campaign season, the soldiers ritually "desacralize[ed] themselves...also cleansing themselves for their acts of violence in battle."²⁸ Dumezil's idea further suggests a sacred distinction between the warrior and the non-warrior, as the warrior undertook a particular religious duty by fighting which the non-warrior did not. The ceremony performed at a Roman soldier's retirement, when the emperor, or his proxy, would perform a ritual releasing the soldier from the religious oath he took upon joining the army, transitioning him back into private life, seems to suggest this as well.²⁹

These ritual purifications may also have marked the transition for the soldier from chaos back to order. Roman society placed high value on order and Rome's citizens saw the empire as a civilizing force against the barbaric chaos of other peoples; for them, Roman conquest brought law, public order, and structure to uncivilized barbarians as much as it did land and treasure to Rome.³⁰ The division between what was civilized (Rome) and was chaotic (barbarians, and thus anyone Rome was at war with) was sacred and sharp, and it was the Roman army which crossed that line to carry order to the peoples of the world.³¹ The presence of the ritual after battle and after the

campaign season may mark a restorative or transitional moment in which the soldier's association with chaos in battle against an uncivilized enemy ends and he returns to the orderly world of Roman civilization.

The Greek Warrior. Ancient and Classical Greek cultures, like that of Rome after them, practiced polytheism, the expression of which included confirmatory and transformatory rituals. Ritual purification with water occurred in Greek funeral rites, with indication that pollution associated itself with living relatives as well as physical location.³² Garland asserts there is "little evidence" to suggest that the cleansing had anything to do with establishing proper relationship to the gods, however.³³ Furthermore, "a Greek male's citizenship was based on his membership in his city's fighting force...his *τιμή*, honor, was directly related to his performance in the line of duty," and "a purely predatory attitude toward the lives and possessions of one's enemies was an essential part of archaic and classical Greek warfare."³⁴ This attitude toward battle makes it unlikely that Greek soldiers would have felt any sense of pollution either from warfare or the soldier's association with, or proximity to, death or blood; cleansing rites were likely observed for fallen comrades and camps, but may have had a purely "practical" force.³⁵

A more important spiritual concept to the Greek soldier than that of pollution may have been that of the necessary separation between the warrior's life and the domestic life. In ancient and classical Greece, city walls held a religious significance as the separation between the sacred and the profane, for inside the walls are the sanctuary and security of domestic peace, while outside the walls exists the world in which warfare and strife takes place.³⁶ In the *Iliad* (perhaps the most famous account of Greek warriors), Homer makes extensive use of metaphor to juxtapose the world of warfare and the domestic life from which the warriors of his tale are separated, evoking *pathos* in the listener; the *Iliad*'s action describes the soldierly activities and battles of the Greeks and Trojans, while Homer's metaphors describe the everyday activities which the Greeks have left behind and been separated from for ten years, such as women sewing and farmers reaping.³⁷ The soldier may

accumulate honor in battle, but he is acutely aware of what he is sacrificing, even if only temporarily, to gain that honor.³⁸ Homer's *Odyssey* and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* are explorations of difficulties the Greek warrior faced as he attempted to return to domestic life after long absence in war. The concept of such separation may have had a sacred significance akin to the idea of the separation of domestic and non-domestic spaces established by walls; it was at least culturally significant to the Greeks of Homer's and Aeschylus' times.

Though Greek soldiers may not have had purification rituals to cleanse themselves after battle, Shay proposes that warriors of certain Greek societies, at least, had a form of transformatory, religiously-significant ritual which served to reintegrate them into domestic society after long separation in mandatory military service and, for most, exposure to combat. He writes,

The performances of Athenian tragic theater—which was a theater of combat veterans, by combat veterans, and for combat veterans—offered cultural therapy, including purification...The ancient Athenians had a distinctive therapy of purification, healing, and reintegration of returning soldiers that was undertaken as a whole political community. Sacred theater was one of its primary means of reintegrating the returning veteran into the social sphere as “citizen.”³⁹

He proposes that soldiers hearing or reciting the *Iliad* would also have experienced a similar sacred catharsis; thus, this might have been one reason for the works' significance in Greek culture.

The Warrior of the Crusades. Warriors of the Crusades were, according to Pope Urban II, “inspired agents of God, who were to be engaged in God’s service out of love for him...the crusaders took him literally and became convinced they were fighting for God.”⁴⁰ Despite this sentiment, and the belief that those fighting in the Crusades were performing a penance or were on a holy pilgrimage, returning warriors were not exempt from the idea that a sort of pollution attached itself to them because of their experience in combat. “The Christian community of the first millennium often made returning warriors undergo prolonged and toilsome penances before they regained normal status in the *corpus Christianum*.”⁴¹

Several Church leaders throughout the time of the Crusades advocated penance for any soldier who had killed in battle; one also suggested penance for those who had wounded in battle, or

who weren't sure if they had killed in battle, with the suggested penance varying from one day a week for life, to three years, to seven years, to abstention from communion for a set time.⁴² Denial of communion as penance would have had special significance in that it prolonged the separation of the warrior from the larger community, as well as from God; it was, in fact, a denial of reintegration into the normal pattern of domestic life for Christians during this time period, as well as a denial of a reconnection of the warrior's soul with God. In this case, penance was the ritual denial of the most important ritual of the larger Christian community until the required time of separation had passed.

Significantly, Church leaders did not advocate for penance based on behavior in battle alone, but thought penance should be required whether the individual Crusader had acted dishonorably in battle, out of greed for personal gain, or out of a sense of public duty and in a just manner.⁴³

According to Verkamp, one explanation for support of this requirement was the "general medieval understanding of penance as certain punishment undergone, either before or after absolution, as a token sorrow for one sins;" he then reconciles the conflicting ideas of a warrior who engages in a just war on behalf of God simultaneously committing sin by using Augustine's concept of concupiscence. "Though 'lawful and right'...the justifiable anger vented...against one's enemies nonetheless unleashes a certain 'bestial desire,' disturbs the warrior's 'peace of mind,' and leaves him in a certain state of 'depravity' from which he needs to be purified."⁴⁴ The Church thus required the warrior's penance to purge the sin associated with participation in battle, whether the sin was incidental or deliberate, and return his soul to the proper state for his relationship with God.

Finally, Verkamp also proposes that the medieval prohibition on priests' fighting and the above-mentioned denial of communion to warriors, who, because of their participation in combat had "blood on their hands," indicate the Church felt a need to preserve the "cultic purity" of the priesthood.⁴⁵ "Because those who had killed in war were considered unclean, they could also be forbidden to partake in communion or serve at the altar [and thus contaminate the priesthood through association or proximity] at least until such time as they had undergone ritual purification."⁴⁶ Thus,

according to Verkamp, the Crusader's penance may have been imposed by the Church for cultic purity (i.e., the needs of an element of society separate from the warrior's society) or purification of the soul because of incidental or deliberate sin.⁴⁷ For the warrior of the Crusades, restoration into the society of God and normal civil life required ritual cleansing through penance or symbolic separation (i.e., abstention from communion), or perhaps both.

Modern Perspective – Relevancy, Context, and the Character of Potential Ritual

Is the Concept of Ritual Purification Relevant to the Modern Soldier? Modern American society, though based in Judeo-Christianity, would still seem to have little in common with religiously-based societies in which "legal and religious norms" are inseparable, or with societies heavily influenced by state-sanctioned and state-imposed religions. Many American soldiers may see themselves as undertaking a sacred duty when they undertake battle; a soldier may acutely feel that the soldier's life of necessity separates him from the life of civilians, perhaps seeing himself as isolating himself from the comfort and privileges such life brings in order to protect them on behalf of society. However, few modern American soldiers are likely to see association with death in battle as a stain on the soul which water or fire can remove. Additionally, the military as a whole is unlikely to think that its acts of killing in a just war pollute it in some way (though conscientious objectors or even individual soldiers may believe this to be so). Likewise, for most soldiers, as for most Americans, the idea of incidental pollution of the soul is foreign; American culture tends to place more emphasis on the concept of free will, and guilt through deliberate action, than on concepts similar to the incidental sin of the Crusades, in which the warrior could act "rightly and justly" but still sin.⁴⁸

However, if the reasons historical societies felt the need for ritual purification are organized conceptually, the concepts then provide points of comparison with the modern American soldier. Organized conceptually, the historical perspectives of the warrior's purification may be said to fall into these categories: a view of battle as causing a type of damage or alteration to the soul (compare Israelite, Christian, and possibly Roman); a view of battle as causing an alteration or interruption in

the warrior's normal or correct relationship to the divine (compare Israelite, Roman, and Christian); and a view of battle as causing an alteration or interruption in the warrior's normal or correct relationship to society (compare Roman, Greek, and Christian).⁴⁹

War as Causing Alteration or Damage to the Warrior's Soul. Though the idea of physical damage to the soul, caused by participation in combat, is certainly a less prevalent idea for modern Americans than it was for warriors of historical cultures (as well as for warriors of some modern, non-Western cultures), it is not entirely absent from the modern warrior's conceptualization. One soldier described a moment in Vietnam, when, as he watched American soldiers kill a woman and her children and set fire to her village, he simultaneously recognized and physically lost his soul: "They weren't the bad guys. We were!...At the very moment I found my soul...and I could see the truth for the first time in my life, at the very second when I knew we were evil, it fled, I lost it."⁵⁰ Another similarly describes the effect of combat on his soul in physical terms when he explains to his psychologist that, while he was fighting at Khe Sanh, he realized, "[my soul's] gone. It fled my body. I felt it leave...You can feel the connection between your body and your soul start to break. It's like a thread that starts fraying...So tell me, Doc, is there a way to get your soul back into your body?"⁵¹

Some concept of the soul as existing physically therefore does exist for some modern soldiers, such that its state can be altered by combat, reminiscent of historical cultures which saw killing, death or blood as imparting an impurity to soul which had to be cleansed physically by fire or water. However, for the modern soldier, a more common conceptualization of alteration to the soul caused by experiences in combat may be that which is described as moral damage, particularly damage expressed by the idea of guilt. Daryl Paulson, a Vietnam veteran who "used his firsthand experience with PTSD to counsel others" after earning a PhD in psychology, felt both blood guilt and an altered relationship with God as a result of killing in combat.⁵² "Plagued with guilt," he writes, "I tried to find a place where I could go for forgiveness, to get away from this hell. I felt too guilty to

go to God and church, for I had killed, I had injured, I had tortured my fellow human beings with intense delight...for I had too much blood on my hands. I reasoned that no one wanted me now, not even God, for I had killed his children.”⁵³

But even for those who did not feel they “killed with delight,” association with combat can produce guilt. “In a war unsupported by the general population, guilt may be produced merely by participation,” making guilt as a symptom of PTSD in Vietnam veterans perhaps more common than veterans of, for example, the World Wars.⁵⁴ But even in wars with popular support, soldiers may not escape feelings of guilt. Figley asserts that “the release of aggressive impulses (temporarily sanctioned) can have a similar effect,” bringing to mind the medieval idea that a Crusader could kill in combat sanctioned by God, yet simultaneously and blamelessly accrue sin through the release of violent emotions.⁵⁵ Thus, a soldier killing in a war justly declared, and in a just manner, may still feel guilt from the act of killing. Tick offers insight into why this may be true for the modern warrior when he proposes that “in order to kill, one must invert one’s sense of good and evil.”⁵⁶ The Judeo-Christian mandate “thou shalt not kill” becomes “thou shalt not kill except when sanctioned by the state.” Killing is evil, but killing a human designated as the enemy is necessary, and therefore, good. The inability to reconcile this quasi-paradox is felt by some as an alteration, whether physically or morally, to the soul. As Tick puts it, “Socrates taught that the soul is that which distinguishes good from evil;” killing in combat, even blamelessly and justly, still causes many to struggle with the existential question of which the soul is the center, “Ultimately, am I a good man or a bad man?”⁵⁷

War as Altering or Interrupting the Warrior’s Relationship with the Divine. While many soldiers undoubtedly draw strength in and after combat from their relationship with the divine, others feel abandoned or betrayed by God, as well as a significant alteration in their understanding of God, as a consequence of their combat experience. Shay writes, “I have heard more than one veteran declare that God kept him alive to torture him: If God had loved him, He would have let him die in Vietnam. Many combat veterans speak of the dead as the lucky ones.”⁵⁸ Here, the veteran’s perspective on

God has been changed: God is not solace, He is pain, and He has betrayed the veteran's former understanding of Him and His relationship to man. Other veterans see themselves as "spiritual orphans."⁵⁹ A deep sense of God's abandonment or betrayal can also occur after the death of a fellow soldier. Shay explains, "Soldiers in combat often hold the lives of their comrades dearer than their own and fear their comrade's deaths more deeply. In our culture, this represents a convergence of Christian self-sacrifice, military training, and the spontaneous bonds of love and loyalty that develop among men who fight together."⁶⁰ When God does not allow the soldier to lay down his life for his comrade (compare John 15:13), but the comrade dies instead, the soldier's understanding of God's character changes. "God as viewed by Christians, Jews, and Moslems also has the power to save, protect, and resurrect—and *when he does not*, He violates the covenant many thought had been passed down to them in religious instruction [emphasis in the original]," producing "a devastating sense of spiritual abandonment and meaninglessness."⁶¹

Another alteration of the warrior's relationship with the divine arises from an altered understanding of one's self. One veteran, who describes himself as having had "strong religious beliefs," and having "wanted to be a priest," says, "war changes you...strips you of all your beliefs, your religion, takes your dignity away, you become an animal."⁶² He describes his religious upbringing and contrasts this with what he experienced because of combat:

I'd come home from school and go right down to the church...It was the way you were taught, like, 'Whenever you're alone, make believe God's there with you. Would he approve of what you are doing?'...I wasn't no angel...but evil didn't enter it 'till Vietnam. I mean real evil. I wasn't prepared for that. Why I became like that? It was all evil. All evil. Where before, I wasn't...You know, it's unbelievable what humans can do to each other.⁶³

What he found himself capable of in combat altered his understanding of himself and of good and evil, and "stripped" him of his previous beliefs concerning God. Comparably, Verkamp suggests that soldiers of the Crusades may have sought penance of their own volition because they saw themselves as altered, and thus their relationship with God as altered, after combat.⁶⁴

Interestingly, the sense of betrayal and abandonment by a higher authority can extend to the state, and combat experience can alter the soldier's relationship to the democratic process.

“Unhealed combat trauma devastates the civic and political life of the returning veteran...The persistent survival skill of unpredictability devastates the simplest forms of democratic participation...Democratic process entails debate, persuasion, and compromise. These all suppose the trustworthiness of words. The moral dimension of severe trauma obliterates the capacity for [such] trust.”⁶⁵ One soldier, raised in his Catholic parish to respect all religions and to place value on separation of church and state, found his experience in combat clashed with what he’d been taught when his company was assigned to protect a group of Vietnamese Catholics as they destroyed a Buddhist temple. “He developed the suspicion that his life was placed at risk by his government in pursuit of an unconstitutional policy on behalf of a church that he now suspected had lied to him all along.”⁶⁶ Others felt betrayed by a God who would sanction anything on behalf of the government. Figley writes, some men “talked about chaplains with great anger and resentment as having blessed the troops, their mission, their guns and their killing: ‘Whatever we were doing—murder, atrocities—God was always on our side’.”⁶⁷ When religious institutions sanctioned *any* American policy or action, some soldiers felt doubly betrayed by the higher authorities of the state and of the sacred.

War as Altering or Interrupting the Warrior’s Relationship with the non-Warrior. Emotional numbness, anger, distrust, and other socially-inhibiting behaviors are common symptoms of PTSD, whether it originates from combat or other some other traumatic experience. For some combat veterans, the inability to express what they have undergone to the non-soldier, and the perception that not only are they misunderstood by the non-soldier, but that they perhaps cannot be understood by him, creates a stark division between the warrior and the non-warrior. Shay asserts, “acts of war generate a profound gulf between the combatant and the community he left behind ...The community worries about the veteran’s self-control. The veteran...may fear that if people knew what he had done, they would reject him or lock him up in a prison or mental hospital. Both the veteran and the community collude in the belief that he is ‘no longer one of us’.”⁶⁸ Veterans who try

to express to non-veterans what combat is like may find this gulf insurmountable, as did one who describes his return this way:

I had just come back [from Vietnam], and my first wife's parents gave a dinner for me and [her relatives]...and her father said, "So, tell us what it was like." And I started to tell them, and I told them. And do you know within five minutes the room was empty. They was all gone, except for my wife. After that I didn't tell anybody I had been in Vietnam.⁶⁹

For some veterans, this gulf is not a mere separation from the non-warrior, but a severance from the non-warrior's society, a society to which the soldier formerly belonged, but to which he now finds himself unable to return. Paulson writes that many veterans felt "they were no longer in Vietnam, nor had they 'returned' home. They were stuck in a waste-land, in a pseudo-return."⁷⁰ Shay expresses a related concept of the veteran who feels "already dead." "'I died in Vietnam' is a common utterance of our patients," he writes. "Most viewed themselves as already dead at some point in their combat service, often after a close friend was killed."⁷¹ One wrote, "In my wildest thoughts, I never expected or wanted to return home alive, and emotionally never have."⁷² Some combat veterans thus feel unable to return to the land of the living (i.e., the land of the non-warrior), because, as they see it, an essential part of their concept of being alive (whether described as their emotions, their soul, or their humanity) did not live through their combat experience.⁷³ The historical Greek warrior would surely have understood this conceptualization and the intense difficulty experienced by these men in their struggle to reconcile the warrior's experience, which they feel they never left, with the domestic world, to which they feel unable to return.

Can Modern American Culture Provide a Context for Ritual with the "Force of Religion"? Ritual and specific religions permeated the historical warrior's society in a way that they do not in America today, partly as a consequence of the fact that "religions tend to weaken when their visible communal rites begin to wane and when religion itself is declared to be solely a matter of individual faith."⁷⁴ As religion in America is, by means of the First Amendment of the US Constitution, a "matter of individual faith" which has resulted in a plurality of beliefs (and non-beliefs), such that no one religion (or even belief in religion itself) can be said to permeate all aspects of society collectively,

has anything filled that contextual vacuum? Even if the concepts examined above can be seen to thread similar themes through the warriors' experiences across time, does any context permeate American culture in the same way that religion or the idea of the sacred did for the cultures of the historical warrior, and thus provide the background for a ritual with Shay's "force of religion"?

Emilio Gentile's conceptualization of American politics as a uniquely American religion, or a type of what was first called a "civil religion" by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1762, may provide a point for comparison of modern cultural context to historical. In his *Social Contract*, Rousseau, "believing that a religious need lies in everyone, proposed a systemic civil religion 'of which the Sovereign would fix the articles.' Such articles would be 'social sentiments without which a man cannot be a good citizen or a faithful subject.'"⁷⁵ Thus, the sovereign ruler of the society would set the sacred values of this type of religion, as the divine does for traditional religions. For Gentile, American civil religion belongs to "the conceptual category that contains the forms of sacralization of a political system that guarantee a plurality of ideas....[it] respects individual freedom, coexists with other ideologies, and does not impose obligatory and unconditional support for its commandments....its origins are democratic, republican, and patriotic."⁷⁶ It is a concept, "by which we mean a system of beliefs, values, myths, rituals and symbols that confer an aura of sanctity on the United States as a political entity, and on the country's institutions, history, and destiny in the world."⁷⁷

Hook and Spanier offer a related observation. "American perceptions of their nation as exceptional, or qualitatively different than others, is not based on a common ethnic identity, language, or religion, but on widely shared beliefs about individual liberties, limited government, and a vigorous civil society. Such principles form a 'civil religion'...that defines the relationship between state and society," similarly to how conceptualization of the divine defined the relationship between state and society for the historical warrior.⁷⁸ According to Hook and Spanier, this idea also finds expression in our foreign policy. The sense of exceptionalism felt by Americans has imparted

“a sense of moral mission” to American foreign policy, in which a “righteous” America seeks to ensure “salvation” for the world in a struggle between “good,” or liberal democracy, and “evil,” or nations which stand in the way of “making the world safe for democracy.”⁷⁹ This sacred, almost messianic, quality which American leaders have assigned to policy has been present since America’s inception, and can also be found in President Obama’s *National Security Strategy (NSS)*.⁸⁰ The language of the *NSS*, which portrays the spread of democracy as a cure for the world’s ills, invites comparison to religious missionaries spreading the “good word” of Christianity to those who are not Christian as a way to civilize and improve them.

This conceptualization also means that, as Bellah observed, “the separation of church and state has not denied the political realm a religious dimension. Although matters of personal religious belief, worship and association are considered to be strictly private affairs, there are, at the same time, certain common elements of religious orientation that the great majority of Americans share.”⁸¹ What are the sacred values of the American perspective of this “religion,” which “the great majority of Americans share”? Obama’s *National Security Strategy* emphasizes these values, among others: individual empowerment, individual ability to determine one’s own destiny, and preservation of privacy and civil rights.⁸² Additionally, according to Gentile, “The American civil religion has its own ‘holy scriptures’,” such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, in which we codify our beliefs in the sacred values of freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and equality.⁸³ These beliefs have a sacred quality imparted to them both by their importance to the founding of our nation and the continued reverence we place on the documents in which they are codified. These documents, as Gentile says, “are treasured and venerated like the Tables of Law.”⁸⁴ We house these, and similar artifacts, in hallowed buildings, in cities with particular significance to our country, and to which tourists may travel like pilgrims on a sacred journey.

While freedom in general may be a republican ideal and common to variations of civil

religion, freedom of (or from) religion specifically is not a characteristic common to all civil religions. For example, “the French Revolution was anticlerical to the core and tried to set up an anti-Christian civil religion.”⁸⁵ American culture places particular importance on individual independence, a value we derive both from the significance to us of our country’s beginnings and from our philosophical roots in the words of men such as Locke and Hobbes; this, coupled with our “scripture” of the First Amendment, serves to sanctify the value we place on freedom of individual religion (or the choice of non-religion). The state is not subordinate to any religion, but neither is anyone’s religion subordinate to the state, and free expression of individual beliefs is accepted and expected in, or alongside, American civil religion.⁸⁶

A belief that freedom of religion and other individual-centered freedoms are, indeed, sacred values informs our laws, our social and educational institutions, and our daily lives in a comparable manner to the historical society’s belief in the proper relationship of man to the divine. In American culture, liberal democracy has a mystic, religious property, and even United States foreign policy promotes its sacred values. It is these values which permeate our society, regardless of our “ethnicity, language, or religion,” as a sense of the divine once permeated the society of the historical warrior. Our relationship with these democratic values thus carries the force of religion and may provide a context within which to understand a ritual for the modern warrior.

The Chairman’s Total Force Fitness: A Military Context for the Soldier’s Soul? The importance of moral and spiritual health to soldiers is intended to be a part of the focus of CJCSI 3405.01, *Total Force Fitness [TFF] Framework*, published in 2011. Instituted by former CJCS Mullen, TFF seeks to establish a new organizational culture of “holistic fitness” in the Department of Defense.⁸⁷

CJCSI 3405.01 defines TFF as a “methodology for understanding, assessing and maintaining the fitness of the armed forces...[It] consists of eight distinct domains: physical, environmental, medical, nutritional, spiritual, psychological, behavioral, and social fitness.”⁸⁸ This would appear to place the soldier’s spirituality on par with other aspects of a soldier’s health, including mental and physical

health. However, the instruction frames “desired outcomes” and “metrics for measuring” spiritual health in primarily psychological and behavioral terms. Outcomes include: unit cohesion, citizenship behaviors, appreciation of diversity differences, productivity and performance, effective coping, retention, perceived stress, ineffective coping (manifesting as substance abuse or anxiety and depression), compassion fatigue, and PTSD, while possible metrics focus on mental health assessments, performance observations and disciplinary problems, substance abuse indicators and various questionnaires.⁸⁹ Thus, examined in terms of the spirit’s relevance to the soldier as discussed above, the CJCSI encourages contemplation of the soldier’s relationship to others, and to the divine as embodied by the state, but its language leaves something to be desired concerning the health of the soldier’s soul and his concept of his relationship to a higher authority besides the state.

Sweeney et al.’s article in *Joint Force Quarterly*, “Spiritual Fitness: A Key Component of Total Force Fitness,” introduces the ideas of values and beliefs, “meaning in life” and “the process of searching for the sacred in one’s life” in an amplifying discussion of the spiritual component of the Chairman’s instruction.⁹⁰ Like the CJCSI, Sweeney et al. use language rooted primarily in psychological and behavioral terms, explaining that “the domain of the human spirit consists of [several] psychological and social components,” and their discussion focuses on these in order to go “beyond any particular means or approach people use to develop their spirit to create a universal model that is within the law.”⁹¹ Despite this emphasis, however, their discussion of what should make up the spiritual component of TFF also makes reference to the human spirit, to the need for its deliberate development, and to the individual’s understanding of it. In doing so, they manage to address the three concepts explored earlier regarding the soldier and why purification is relevant to him. Sweeney et al. place value on the idea of the soul, though they do not use the term specifically, by calling for reflection on “who one is” and “how one fits into life’s larger meaning,” bringing to mind Tick’s existential question, “Am I a good or bad person?”⁹² They also explore the warrior’s relationship to the non-warrior as a vital concept when considering the human spirit, and recognize

that the individual soldier's relationship to "the divine" may be important to his own understanding of spirituality.⁹³ Sweeney et al.'s amplification of the TFF's spiritual component may therefore provide commanders, support professionals, and the soldier himself with some additional spiritual context for addressing the soldier's soul and his relationship to the divine in the assessment of the soldier's overall health. Such language is vitally important if the TFF is to inform the Services' resilience programs and set a new military-wide culture of holistic fitness.

What Ritual Does the Returning Warrior Currently Undertake? Considering the military context indicated by the TFF, it is not surprising that "rituals" of the returning modern American warrior focus overwhelmingly on physical or psychological assessment. Post-deployment assessment "rituals" (mandatory discussions with medical professionals and both mandatory and optional health questionnaires) in the Army and the Air Force focus on identifying "recognizable physical or psychological traumas," as well as behavioral indicators, with the aim of referral to mental, physical, or behavioral support agencies as necessary.⁹⁴ In 2011, in a study sponsored by the Department of Defense, the RAND National Defense Research Institute published "a focused literature review to identify factors that were supported by the literature (e.g., evidence-informed) for promoting psychological resilience" in soldiers pre- and post-combat.⁹⁵ Of the twenty-three programs it examined, "most...emphasize[d] psychological content. Many also addressed physical and social content, and fewer addressed spiritual content."⁹⁶ Dugal's observation that "contemporary mental health professionals place little importance on the spiritual and moral domain when factoring reasons for *psychological symptoms* [emphasis added]" may partly explain why post-deployment assessments tend to focus on "recognizable physical or psychological traumas" in determining the need for a soldier's follow-up care, as well as why more programs for follow-up care, such as those in the RAND study, likewise emphasize physical and mental health disproportionately more than spiritual health.⁹⁷ If Dugal is correct, this may also explain, in part, why, for some soldiers, the question, "Would you like to speak with a Chaplain?" marks the extent of any spiritual "ritual" they

undertake upon return from deployment.

Yet for other soldiers, the “ritual” of return from combat can have transitional, or even restorative, force. A soldier’s service may require a transitional period of formal training upon return from combat, emphasizing psychological, physical, social, and moral wellness, including teaching the soldier awareness of and ability to self-identify potential problems he may have. For the Army, the termination of this training at one time included a formal ceremony in which the soldier would resume the wearing of the Army beret for the first time since his return from deployment, as a demarcation of the soldier’s transition from a status of “returning” to society to a status of “returned” to society, i.e., as a symbolic reintegration.⁹⁸ The Army’s Transitional Warrior Command takes specifically-referred soldiers, who need six months or more of “rehabilitative care and complex care management,” and seeks to help them with transformation through individual-centered goal setting in several areas, to include spiritual.⁹⁹ The act of setting and achieving goals can certainly offer a sense of ritualized transition to the soldier, and depending on the nature of the goal, may also impart restorative qualities.

Tick and Shay each recommend specific religious rituals to some of their veterans for transformatory healing. Tick finds that Native American religious ritual seems to have particular efficacy in restorative healing for some of the veterans with whom he works; Shay, whose veterans primarily come from Catholic backgrounds, frequently refers them to specific priests for assistance with religious purification.¹⁰⁰ However, if we accept that American civil religion provides cultural context for the modern American soldier, then, setting aside legal considerations, the need to maintain the integrity of the sacred value we place on individual freedom and expression precludes any specifically religious ritual for post-combat veterans, and may well limit the military to common (i.e., experienced at the same time, in the same manner by all) transitional ceremony (such as the donning of the Army beret), rather than any common restorative ritual.

What Might a Ritual for the Modern Soldier Look Like Within the Context of American Civil

Religion? While American civil religion (and the laws which are based upon it) thus make it doubtful that any particular common ritual is possible for the modern American soldier, Usbeck proposes that the art of military blogging offers a new type of ceremonial storytelling that can be seen “as enhancing community-building and as decreasing the social and moral gap between soldiers and civil society...[it] provide[s] tools for post-industrial society to emulate the sense of community typical for indigenous and small, close-knit communities.”¹⁰¹ Blogging would therefore also emulate the sense of community available to the historical warrior because of the close, communal relationship between religion and society.

Furthermore, as Usbeck explains, military blogging has the force of ritualized storytelling:

[The blog's] narrative comprises both the original post and the comments, and the collective knowledge of all contributors informs the eventual narrative...the community's feedback is “to assert not only that [they] have read the post, but also that [they] care enough about the post to *act* in some manner...” [This] allows an understanding of milblog comments as community rituals: As authors and commenters across the milblog community discuss military service as a contribution “to something bigger than oneself,” individual milblog comments become ritualistic contributions to the master narrative and the group identity of the community.¹⁰²

Restorative ritual, according to Shay, Tick, and others, requires such narrative retelling and communalization of traumatic experience, and, additionally, requires some participation by “the community as a whole,” for it is the community which has asked the soldier to undertake the combat experience on its behalf. While post-deployment medical assessments, training, and other government-run programs are vitally important, they cannot carry the force of ritual restoration because they do not involve the larger community; that they properly do not do so out of privacy and other considerations does not change this as a requirement for restorative ritual's efficacy. Usbeck proposes that “milblogging can complement these efforts in veteran reintegration because it offers a way to share experience through storytelling even before the soldier's return, because it enables community dialogue, and because it features invite both a personal and collective ceremonial exchange between veterans and civil society.”¹⁰³ In this way, he links military blogging both to the historical, ritual tradition of restorative ceremonial storytelling, and to the acceptance of that story

within the larger community which Shay and Tick insist is essential for the moral and spiritual restoration of the individual soldier. Thus, soldiers who participate in milblogging may have found their own form of restorative ritual.

To Usbeck's insightful analysis, I meekly add that military blogging, and to a lesser extent any writing which the soldier will allow others to read, may have particular restorative efficacy for the soldier immersed in American civil religious tradition, because of the sacred value we place on individual freedom of expression. What Usbeck sees as a limitation or drawback to blogging, that "bloggers usually blog by themselves [and therefore] have no other combat participants to add, correct, and help finish the puzzle" may not be a drawback within American civil religion, because of this emphasis on individualism.¹⁰⁴ Considering Usbeck's persuasive explanation of the way in which blogging links the individual to the community, the soldier may well find that any writing which he is willing to share with others simultaneously reveres the sacred value our civil religion places on individuality and allows the communalization necessary for restoration.

Conclusion and Recommendations. American civil religion provides a comparable context to the religious context of the historical warrior's society. Some modern American soldiers, especially those identified as in need of more assistance with post-combat reintegration than their peers, are exposed to activities which may have transformatory force. However, these activities are at best inconsistently or selectively applied, and may be more likely to carry a focus on psychological, physical and behavioral assistance, even when purporting to come under the heading of spiritual health. The selective nature of transitional programs may reflect fiscal decisions (no doubt it is far cheaper to send every soldier a questionnaire than it is to send every soldier through formal post-deployment transitional training), but it loses sight of a point which both Shay and Tick reiterate: every soldier "who has shed blood, however blamelessly," is in need of some sort of transformatory ritual. We do not leave the soldier to guess whether he needs physical or psychological assistance; post-deployment medical requirements provide him ample opportunity to self-identify or be

identified as needing referral. Yet the same emphasis does not seem to be placed on providing the soldier a language with which to ask for spiritual or moral assistance. Dugal attests that “it is [as] necessary to assist the soldier in the process of spiritual refinement orientation through spiritual awareness, the cultivation of spiritual accountability, and faith development as it is to address physical or psychological concerns.”¹⁰⁵ This would surely include awareness of the potential moral and spiritual damage combat can cause, as well as its potential to damage the mind and the body.

This is not to say that such an emphasis does not occur, or that the chaplaincy is non-existent in the return of the soldier from combat, nor to say that chaplains themselves do not possess extensive language with which to discuss the soldier’s spiritual and moral health. It is to emphasize that words have meaning, and the language used for the TFF’s spiritual construct, with metrics focused on psychological and behavioral assessments, is inadequate. It is to agree with Dugal that the language of the spirit must extend beyond the chaplaincy into the larger military culture.¹⁰⁶ For senior leaders to omit setting up the expectation of such an extension of language in formal instruction, such as CJCSI 3405.01, risks failing to provide soldiers themselves a language with which to discuss sacred matters. What leaders do not pay attention to imparts just as much information to an organization’s followers as what they do pay attention to, whether such omission is intentional or not.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, revisions of the CJCSI, through which the Chairman intends to impart a “holistic” focus on health to military culture, must include references to metrics for spirituality explicitly designed to assess not only its psychological and behavioral aspects, but Sweeney et al.’s concept of awareness of self as it relates to the meaning of life (i.e., a value-neutral way of addressing the concept of the soul), and the soldier’s own spiritual awareness, including his understanding of his relationship to the divine. To the instruction’s suggested spiritual metrics could be added mechanisms for assessing effective coping regarding personal values (not just civic or Service values), as well as assessing the soldier’s moral, spiritual, and religious beliefs pre- and post-combat, and an assessment of the soldier’s concept of moral and spiritual “pain.”¹⁰⁸

As to a specific purification ritual, if, as a society, we are to maintain faith with the sacred values of our civil religion, we may find that there is no common ritual we can offer the returning soldier in answer to Shay's plea to provide something with "religious force." We may therefore have no choice but to let the soldier develop his own restoration through such rituals as milblogging, as this may be the type of ritual purification which we can reconcile with American sacred values. Through writing, the soldier is free to explore the concepts which compelled the historical warrior to seek restorative ritual: how combat has affected his soul, his relationship to the divine, and his relationship to others. But this does not mean that we have to leave the soldier to figure out *how* to narrate *on his own*. The military community can ensure that the context of the soldier's return provides him with a language for spiritual expression in the same way it provides him with a framework for assessing his physical and psychological health and stability. For *every* soldier, this language must surely include something more than, "Would you like to see a Chaplain?" Sweeney et al.'s amplifying exploration of the TFF's spiritual component makes a good starting place from which to develop such a spiritual language for inclusion in formal military literature outside the chaplaincy.

¹ Clinical psychotherapist Dr. Edward Tick writes that "every participant in modern war inevitably experiences some degree of psychological, moral or spiritual breakdown." *War and the Soul*, 77. As Meredith et al. point out in *Promoting Psychological Resilience*, many soldiers "and their families cope well under these difficult circumstances, [but] many will also experience difficulties handling stress at some point." See iii.

² This paper will use "he," "his," and "him" as the pronouns for referring to the warrior or soldier throughout to comply with correct English grammar rules. No implication that women should not be soldiers or are not included in the concept of "soldier" under discussion is intended.

³ Shay, *Odysseus in America*, 245.

⁴ The idea that such ritual is needed is discussed by both Shay and Tick. I will expand upon their discussion by fleshing out a comparison between historical perspectives on this need and a modern one.

⁵ Zuesse, "Ritual," *The Encyclopedia of Religion Volume 12*, 414-416.

⁶ Ibid., 415.

⁷ Ibid., 416.

⁸ Ibid., 417.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Preston, "Purification," *The Encyclopedia of Religion Volume 12*, 91-92.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The terms "warrior" and "soldier" are used interchangeably, though "warrior" most often refers to a historical soldier, and "soldier" to a modern warrior. The use of "soldier" for the modern warrior is the broad sense of anyone serving in combat, not in the restricted sense of applying only to the Soldier of the United States Army.

¹³ Eichler, "Israelite Law: An Overview," *The Encyclopedia of Religion Volume 7*, 466, 468.

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- ¹⁴ Ibid., 468.
- ¹⁵ See Harmon, *The Interpreter's Bible Volume II*.
- ¹⁶ *Numbers* 22-24.
- ¹⁷ *Deuteronomy* 23:14.
- ¹⁸ See *Numbers* 31:6-16
- ¹⁹ This section refers to the Imperial Army in the time of Augustus and afterward, but prior to Christianity becoming the official religion of the Empire.
- ²⁰ Garnsey and Seller, *The Roman Empire*, 163.
- ²¹ The Latin phrase *do ut des*, which translates as "I give so that you may give," expresses this view of ritual. Mattingly describes Roman religion as "contractual in the way it represented human interaction with divine powers." See *An Imperial Possession*, 306.
- ²² Derks, *Gods, Temples, and Ritual Practices*, 101.
- ²³ Lendon, *Pollution and Religion in Ancient Rome*, 127.
- ²⁴ Pritchett, *The Greek State at War*, 196.
- ²⁵ Lendon, *Pollution and Religion in Ancient Rome*, 127.
- ²⁶ See Lendon, *Pollution and Religion in Ancient Rome*, throughout for this concept in the larger Roman culture.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 128.
- ²⁸ Dumezil, in *Achilles in Vietnam*, 153.
- ²⁹ Herz, "Sacrifice and Sacrificial Ceremonies," 95.
- ³⁰ For one discussion of this out of many, see Derks, *Gods, Temples and Ritual Practices*, 33-36.
- ³¹ Compare the depiction of Roman civilization bringing order to chaos, including through war, in Vergil's description of Aeneas' shield in *The Aeneid*, Book VIII, lines 626-728. See Clark, *Art and the Hero*, especially Chapter 2.
- ³² Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, 43-44.
- ³³ Ibid., 47.
- ³⁴ Neusner, *Just War in Religion and Politics*, 28.
- ³⁵ Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, 47-48. Additionally, though Homer does not associate battle with pollution in general, a warrior could, in battle, act in way which angered the gods. Achilles "foully" mistreated the body of the Trojan warrior Hector before the eyes of his parents, angering some of the Olympian gods, who demanded he stop and return Hector's body to his family. See *Iliad*, Book XXIV.
- ³⁶ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 90.
- ³⁷ The same *pathos* is found in the description of the artwork on Achilles' shield. See Clark, *Art and the Hero*, especially Chapter 1.
- ³⁸ See *Iliad*, Book IX, ll.412-416.
- ³⁹ Shay, *Odysseus in America*, 152-153.
- ⁴⁰ Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, 4.
- ⁴¹ Verkamp, "Moral Treatment of the Returning Warrior," 224.
- ⁴² Ibid., 224-225.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 225.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 229, 234-235.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 224-225.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 227.
- ⁴⁷ He also discusses the warrior's personal conviction that he may require purification through penance because of a sense of shame at having killed, even in a just war and in a just manner, or out of a sense of guilt at having fallen short of an ideal Christian perfection or a "chivalric ideal." See 236.
- ⁴⁸ Even in religions affirming original sin, there are many which also affirm free will; sin after baptism is thought to accumulate from deliberate choice to commit sinful acts more than from association.
- ⁴⁹ These are not intended to be exhaustive categories, but general ones drawn from the historical review.
- ⁵⁰ Tick, *War and the Soul*, 111-112.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 12-13.
- ⁵² Krippner et al., 24-25.
- ⁵³ Paulson and Krippner, , 101
- ⁵⁴ Figley, *Stress Disorders*, 35.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Tick, *War and the Soul*, 113.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 110, 114.
- ⁵⁸ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 180.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 146
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 74.

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- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² Ibid., 33.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Verkamp, "Moral Treatment of the Returning Warrior," 236.
- ⁶⁵ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 180-181.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 114-115.
- ⁶⁷ Figley, *Stress Disorder*, 219.
- ⁶⁸ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 152.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., xxii.
- ⁷⁰ Paulson and Krippner, *Haunted by Combat*, 102.
- ⁷¹ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 51.
- ⁷² Ibid., 53.
- ⁷³ See both Tick and Shay for further discussion.
- ⁷⁴ Nisbet, "Civil Religion," 526.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 524. As with all theoretical and philosophical discussions, there is a debate on the meaning and form of the concept "civil religion." Gentile's is followed here as he provides a definition specific to his analysis of the culture of the United States.
- ⁷⁶ Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, xv-xvi.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., xiii. Consider the American eagle and flag (icons); legends about George Washington (mystical and mythic founders), for whom we have a built monument in the Nation's most sacred city (temples); Lincoln, JFK and Martin Luther King (martyred saints); the saying of the pledge of allegiance and oaths of office (rituals and creeds); the holidays of Memorial Day and Presidents' birthdays (feast days); and 'from many one' and 'in God we trust' (mantras). See Gentile for discussion.
- ⁷⁸ Hook and Spanier, *Foreign Policy*, 13.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 9-11; 13-17.
- ⁸⁰ See *ibid.*, 13-17, for the concept of good and evil in policy from Thomas Jefferson through Bush.
- ⁸¹ Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 3.
- ⁸² Obama, *NSS*, introduction and 36-38.
- ⁸³ Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, xiii.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 13.
- ⁸⁶ For similar discussion, see Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, xiii-xvi.
- ⁸⁷ Cornum et al., "Resilience," 31.
- ⁸⁸ CJCSI 3405.01, A-1.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., see D-4 to D-5.
- ⁹⁰ Sweeney et al., "Spiritual Fitness," 36.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., 37.
- ⁹² Ibid., 39.
- ⁹³ Ibid., 36-40.
- ⁹⁴ Dugal, "Affirming the Soldier's Spirit," 10, for reference to the Army. Informal discussion amongst ACSC Air Force flight members for Air Force reference.
- ⁹⁵ Meredith et al., *Promoting Psychological Resilience*, iii.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., 36-37.
- ⁹⁷ Dugal, "Affirming the Soldier's Spirit," 10-11.
- ⁹⁸ Class discussion, ACSC, Maxwell AFB.
- ⁹⁹ See the Warrior's Transitional Command website at <http://wtc.army.mil>.
- ¹⁰⁰ See Tick, *War and the Soul* and Shay, *Odysseus in America*.
- ¹⁰¹ Usbeck, "My Blog," 272.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., 278-9.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid., 284.
- ¹⁰⁴ Usbeck, "My Blog," 276.
- ¹⁰⁵ Dugal, "Affirming the Soldier's Spirit," 11.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., author's abstract.
- ¹⁰⁷ See Schien, *Organizational Culture*.
- ¹⁰⁸ See Scrufield and Blank's "A Guide to Obtaining a Military History from Viet Nam Veterans," in *The Trauma of War*, especially 280.

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